

Christ in Prophecy
Prophetic Voices 6: Interview with Dr. Al Mohler

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Opening

Tim Moore: Welcome to Christ in Prophecy and our series of interviews with some of God's prophetic voices to America.

Dr. Al Mohler, the president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, has been called the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S." For several years he has been sounding the alarm on the storm brewing in our American culture. As you listen to Dr. Mohler's insights we first aired 2020, consider how far we've fallen as a society in just the past year and a half.

Interview with Dr. Al Mohler at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Tim Moore: I want to begin really with asking you about your origins. How you came to be here? Because we have witnessed over and over again that many Christian institutions, whether they are churches, denominations even seminaries have begun to abandon their scriptural foundations, even denying the Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. And so, what has been your experience as you came to Southern, and some of the challenges you faced early on even in your tenure as president.

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, when I came to Southern as a very young man, I was 20 years old, it was a very liberal institution.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And I really didn't know that because you wouldn't expect that of a school that was named The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Southern Baptist, not a liberal people.

Tim Moore: No.

Dr. Al Mohler: But that just shows us the temptation, and you alluded to this of higher education. The temptation is to move into a critical mode, which means eventually you distance yourself from the founding convictions that brought the school into being. And of course, this is a very old story. You can look to the European universities all established within the Christian worldview, and then growing antagonistic to Christianity. And in the United States you can look at university after university, beginning of course most infamously with Harvard.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: Which was established for the training of Puritan ministers, that was the sole reason for its existence. And then you look at the fact that institution by institution they follow the same trajectory.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And by the way, this is a modeling process. Higher educational institutions want to look like the prestige institutions. You know, so, if the prestige institutions are the Harvards, and the Yales and the Browns, and the John Hopkins, then other schools want to look like that.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And pretty soon you hire professors who look like that. And before you know it you end up with a very liberal institutions. And that's what happened to this seminary. Conservatives in the SBC began to wake up to this in the 1960's and 70's but it took them 20 years to gain control. And they gained control in the very early 1990's when a newly conservative board of trustees elected me as the institutions ninth president. And with a mandate to bring this institution back to an unquestioned commitment to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and to the Bible as the inspired, and inerrant Word of God.

Tim Moore: Well, I was going to say under your leadership, and through the Lord's blessing, Southern as a seminary has grown to be the largest seminary in the United States.

Dr. Al Mohler: Actually, in the world.

Tim Moore: In the world.

Dr. Al Mohler: In fact, right now there are more young men training for the ministry here, then have ever been at one place, and one time in the history of Christianity. They said, if you bring this institution back to conservative theology you will scare all the students off. But it is the liberal schools that don't have any students. All the students you find training for ministry these days are actually in conservative institutions. You think that would be a parable, wouldn't you?

Tim Moore: I would think so. And I've seen many parables like that in Scripture. From a personal standpoint, obviously there were moments, I'm sure, of great if not discouragement, then yearning to get through some of the trials that you were enduring, and so, how did you overcome? And how did the Lord help you to persevere through all of the circus that was swirling around you, some even internal to the institution?

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, you know, Tim, I've been president here for 26 years.

Tim Moore: I know.

Dr. Al Mohler: And I do want to tell you one of the best pieces of advice I was given when I was elected as a very young man, I was only 33 years old. And so, I had a very old man, he was a very wise man and he said, "They may out money you, they may outmaneuver you, they may out lawyer you, but they can't outlive you." They elected a 33-year-old president in order to say he's going to be here for a while, deal with it.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And you know it takes time. You know anything worth doing takes time. And we had to go through some very lean years before the Lord gave us the fat years, biblically speaking. And so, we had to be willing to do that. But look at one point Mary and I, my dear wife, we just gave it up, and we knew the battle was the Lord's because we weren't going to be able to pull this off. But God did.

Tim Moore: Yes, He did.

Dr. Al Mohler: And what God used, just wonderful Christians in local churches who understood the importance of defending the truth, and they wanted Gospel ministers. They cared who was going to preach to their grandchildren, and they made a difference.

Tim Moore: You've mentioned the word culture many times, but you talk through your daily podcast, known as "The Briefing," about examining the news from a Christian worldview. So, I would like you to address what is a Christian worldview? To someone who is unfamiliar with that term, what is a Christian worldview? And how does it differ from all others?

Dr. Al Mohler: You know everybody has a worldview, and you don't think about it until you have to. And so, Christians throughout most of Christianity and its history of the United States didn't have to think much about worldview, because the worldview around us was basically the same as our own, or at least it was not confrontational. So, there were people who might not have been converted born again believing Christians, but they agreed with us on morality. They agreed with us on the definition of marriage. They agreed with us on massive issues. And so much so that what we would call cultural Christianity was the dominate mode in the society. Well, you don't have to think much about worldview then. But when all of a sudden you realize there are people disagreeing with us. There are people defining marriage differently than we do. There are people who use the word truth, but they don't mean by that word what we do. Then you have to think about it.

Francis Schaeffer is kind of my mentor in this, and he was one of my rescuers when I was a teenager, a famous Christian apologist. He's the one who introduced me to the word worldview; it simply means the picture of the world that we have. The lens through which we interpret and decide and understand everything. So, there is a Christian understanding of reality. There is a Biblical understanding of humanity. A secular understanding of humanity is very different. When we talk about human rights and human dignity we are not talking about something that just belongs to us because we are humans. We are talking about something that is God's gift to us because the Creator made us in His image. When we talk about truth, we talk about what Schaeffer called true truth, which means we mean it is true, not just for you, not just for me.

Tim Moore: Eternally so.

Dr. Al Mohler: That $2+2=4$ for everybody because God created an orderly universe and revealed it. So, we talk about worldview now because we have to explain why is it that other people looking at a question like abortion, or marriage, or sexuality, how could they possibly come to their conclusions that they come to? On "The Briefing," what I try to do is to help Christians to understand, look, almost every media report you get is going to be coming from a secular worldview.

Tim Moore: It certainly is.

Dr. Al Mohler: If Christians were looking at this story from a Christian worldview how would we see it? That's what I do five times a week.

Tim Moore: Well, Dr. Mohler, I think that you would agree that one of the greatest threats to our religious liberty in 2019, and quite frankly our constitutional order as a society, as it stands at least today is the accelerating sexual revolution.

Dr. Al Mohler: Right.

Tim Moore: So, how did we get where we are today? How did we wake up and find that the pot is boiling, it's not just starting to increase in heat?

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, I have to go back to when I was 13, and my Sunday School teacher told me that I should read through the Bible. And I never read through the entire Bible until I was 13, so I started to read through the entire Bible. I read it the way I read any other book, starting with Genesis. Do you know what I discovered very quickly? Human sexual behavior and misbehavior are not new.

Tim Moore: Oh, no.

Dr. Al Mohler: So, just reading the Bible led to interesting conversations with my parents. Like what does this mean? What is this? And at some point I realized God didn't have to say, "Don't do that, unless there were people who were doing that." And so when we ask the question: Where did it come from? I think one of the things we have to recognize, you know Will and Ariel Durant, the famous historians who wrote, *The Story of Civilization*. They said that the first task of any civilization is to bank the raging river of human sexuality. I think that is absolutely right. You can't have a civilization without banking that river of human sexuality. So, where you find society you've always found marriage. You have found respect for the family. You have found both licit and illicit sexual behaviors. And it has been important for civilization to exist that those rules be understood. And one of God's gifts to His people, has come to people Israel, was that He gave them the most superior laws.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: You know in the book of Deuteronomy God speaks to Moses to say, "Has any other people received laws like these?" And it didn't mean, boy, this works out well. He meant, oh, my goodness, evidentially these are the laws that the Creator would give the creatures He loves. This is what life is supposed to be about. The modern age has been an effort to try to undo all of that. To try to unbank that river. To turn to the autonomous individual, by the way that is the big shift. The big shift in the modern age is away from God as the ultimate reality, to the human individual as the ultimate reality. And if the human individual is the ultimate reality, then I can determine whatever sexual morality I want. One historian looking at the modern age said, "That the whole modern age is just one long experiment in rationalized sexual misbehavior." So, it is like we have to understand that human sexual misbehavior is not new.

What is new is a society that says we are going to commit suicide. We are going to say, "Okay, do whatever you want." We are going to say, "Everything is normal." We are going to say, "Marriage can be whatever you want it to be." We are going to break the most molecular unit necessary to civilization, the union of a man and a woman. And the household that is created with the children that comes to them by procreation. We are going to break that and act like that's just a lifestyle choice. Now, you mentioned this by introducing the question as religious liberty.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, there we have a huge problem. Because this new sexual set of liberties directly contradicts the teaching of Scripture. And by the way one of the interesting things is that

wherever you find any religious system, with a written set of rules, it's amazing that written set of rules is not compatible with the sexual revolution.

Tim Moore: No, it's not.

Dr. Al Mohler: So, again I would attribute that to God's common grace, just what He has revealed in Creation. The unit of a man and a woman in marriage, and the necessity of legislating sexuality. Well, the problem is what are the laws going to be? And increasingly the laws are going to be that we have to surrender to the moral revolution, or the sexual revolution or we are going to be outlaws. And so that's that collision between the new sexual liberty, and religious liberty. And in the United States this should be particularly troubling to us because religious liberty is guaranteed in the Constitution.

Tim Moore: The very first of the Amendments.

Dr. Al Mohler: That's right. This one is called an enumerated right. And by the way the Federal Government does not give us religious liberty, it respects and recognizes religious liberty. But, sexual liberty, it's not even in the Constitution. It takes a liberal court, you know, to come up with that. So, we have a huge collision and it's going to be tough going for Christians. We need to recognize that.

Tim Moore: You had touched recently on some of the dynamics in France, even with the burning of Notre Dame, and if we go back even to the French Revolution as contrasted with the American Revolution, the emphasis on unfettered liberty in France actually led to a bloodbath and a nightmare of depravity. Whereas the constrained and responsibility liberty, I'll call it, here in the United States led to flourishing for a number of years, and many, many generations.

Dr. Al Mohler: Yeah, it is interesting you use the word liberty in France, and the word liberty in the United States, and historically they've not meant the same thing.

Tim Moore: No.

Dr. Al Mohler: And it comes from two different branches of the Enlightenment. There was a radical enlightenment that took place on the European continent, France as its epicenter. And there was a conservative enlightenment that took place in Scotland, and in England, Britain, what we would call the United Kingdom, and that's what came to the United States. And the founders of this country were men of the Enlightenment, but they men of the English speaking enlightenment.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And so, liberty to them meant ordered liberty. And that's why our understanding of liberty produced a Constitution. One of the most well-argued constitutions imaginable. The longest existing ruling constitution, or I should say governing constitution in the history of humanity. And whereas in France the word liberty meant individual, unfettered liberty.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: And oh, by the way the Enlightenment in the United States grounded liberty in God. You know it is that God has, the Creator has endowed us with certain inalienable rights. In France there was no Creator, it was a secular enlightenment. And so, it was just the individual

unfettered liberty, and of course that led to the terror, it led to the French Revolution. And by the way France is not a stable society.

Tim Moore: No.

Dr. Al Mohler: You know de Gaulle established the fifth republic, back in the late 20th century. And it's had government, after government, after government, and riots on the streets right now. It is a very different understanding of liberty.

Tim Moore: It is. I think it is fascinating, and I won't make this into a question, but just Alexis de Tocqueville coming here as a Frenchman and observing what is it that makes America work. And he had some poignant observations even on the role of religion in our society, and again called it that restrained and ordered liberty that we made work so very well.

Dr. Al Mohler: That is what he wanted to happen in France, but it didn't.

Tim Moore: It did not. Dr. Mohler, you were one of the original signatories of the Nashville Statement in 2017.

Dr. Al Mohler: Right.

Tim Moore: Can you tell us a little bit about what that is about, and what it has done in the last couple years?

Dr. Al Mohler: Yeah, I was involved also in the drafting of that document.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: The need for it is extreme. From time to time Christians have had to release a statement saying this is what the Church believes. And you know in the very earliest years in centuries of the Church it was what the Church has to believe about the person and work of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity. But we're now at a point where the intellectual rebellion around us is so widespread we have to define what it means to be male and female. We have to define what it means to be a man or a woman. We have to define sexual morality in an age of such horrifying confusion. And so, the Nashville Statement is intended just to be that. A statement of a biblical framework for sexuality, and gender. We are in a society, you know, is calling boys girls, and girls boys.

Tim Moore: So much confusion.

Dr. Al Mohler: There needs to be some document, and that's why that was put together. And by the way they'll be new things we are going to have to address we don't even know of yet.

Tim Moore: I can only imagine, and don't look forward to that day.

Dr. Al Mohler: No.

Tim Moore: I know that you have great admiration for Sir Winston Churchill who seemed destined to lead his nation, and indeed throughout the world, in World War II. You've also cited modern prophets such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn who lamented, "Men have forgotten God." What advice would those who have come before offer us today? And do you see anyone with the clarity voice to shake the scales from the eyes of our society?

Dr. Al Mohler: You know I think part of the problem in the last part of the question is that in the age of social media, and the way cultural communication happens now, it is hard for there to be a single voice about anything. That is one of the problems. With Churchill, one of the great strengths that Churchill brought was he could control the microphone.

Tim Moore: That's true.

Dr. Al Mohler: And then he had something that was worthy of saying. Would later be said of him, "He marshalled the English language, and sent it to war. He became the lion of the British people." Or as he said, "The British people were the lion, I just got to give the roar." It's harder these days. I mean I think of the great age of the past when people would debate genuine ideas, these days we are down to 140 characters. So, I think that is part of it. But when you think about the Churchill's and the Solzhenitsyn's and the other prophetic voices of the 20th Century I think they would say this is what we told you would happen. You know one of the greatness of Solzhenitsyn was when he said, "Men have forgotten God." He said that at a speech given at Harvard University.

Tim Moore: Yes, and they were not very pleased to hear that.

Dr. Al Mohler: No, and they also weren't pleased that he drew the consequences saying, "When you look at the United States and the Soviet Union your cultural relativism falls apart. I was persecuted by one and rescued by the other." They are morally unequal. Which the liberals at Harvard had been denying for a long time. That kind of moral clarity is what we desperately need today.

Tim Moore: I would agree with you. Absolutely. We lack for those voices, which is why it is so valuable, and as Dr. Reagan has identified, that we do have some prophetic voices. Now much like John they are crying in the wilderness because there is so much other clamor of noise. But I appreciate your voice, and through "The Briefing," and other outreaches that you have a great impact on our society and beyond, really worldwide.

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, I appreciate that. We have to keep speaking. We have to speak into the wind. When the winds howl at us the fiercest, we just have to talk louder. And Christians need to listen. I don't mean they have to listen to me, what I mean is they need to listen, they need to listen to discern the truth. And I think that is becoming increasingly difficult.

Tim Moore: And quite frankly I will add to that, they need to listen, and they also need to speak themselves.

Dr. Al Mohler: Yes.

Tim Moore: Far too often I believe many Christians have been silent. And you wrote a book saying, *We Cannot be Silent*.

Dr. Al Mohler: That's right.

Tim Moore: And so, we cannot be silent. In the midst of the noise, we have to speak clearly, sometimes boldly.

Dr. Al Mohler: That's right.

Tim Moore: Lovingly, but always truthfully, and that is very important. What do you see as the cultural atmosphere of our society in 20 years and beyond if the Lord stays His coming?

Dr. Al Mohler: Twenty-years seems like a very long time, almost eschatological when you think about the--

Tim Moore: But you have been here 26.

Dr. Al Mohler: I have.

Tim Moore: And it is only a short span.

Dr. Al Mohler: I have, but you know same-sex marriage as it is called these days, it's been legal by court mandate across this country, only since 2015. You know, so, a child who is four was born before the Obergefell Decision, legalizing same-sex marriage. That's how fast this revolution is moving. If you just think about it same-sex marriage is now taken as a great moral fact in this society, so much that you would think it had been in place 50 years ago. So, when you ask me, I'll tell you, yeah the things coming, I don't have to have a lot of insight to see this, polygamy, what is called polyamory. I mean once you begin to redefine marriage, and we are way down that road, then eventually you can't say no to anyone's proposed revision. If consent is the only moral issue a secular society recognizes, then you can get over anything in the name of consent. And that's what we're going to see. And I think what perhaps is going to endanger Christianity in this country more than anything else is the realization, and I'm trying to figure out how to say this in a way that Christian will hear, they have been and are now, and will be coming for our children.

Tim Moore: They already are.

Dr. Al Mohler: And in the future they are going to be coming with new tools to use against us. They get to our children right now in ways no one had to worry about a generation ago. They get to our kids by smartphone, and by the way we buy them and put them in the hands of our kids. Say, "Here, here, here, use this." Well, we are just inviting that hostile world to come in and take over their minds. And then when we send them into any number of places from schools to other places, we're saying we are just handing them over. And they're coming for our children. They will, I predict they will redefine child abuse, or child neglect in such a way that parents raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be considered deficient parents.

Tim Moore: As we witness the world growing darker day by day, I'm reminded of what Pastor Adrian Rogers once said, he used to say, "It is growing gloriously dark." And he was referring to the sign of the times pointed to in Titus 2:13 which says, "That we should look for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus." As you sound an ominous note, and as we recognize the signs of the times pointing to an even darker future within our culture, and society globally. What do you say to people who are looking for hope as Christians regarding the things to come?

Dr. Al Mohler: Tim, you used exactly the right word for Christians, it's hope. And so, people will often ask me, "Are you optimistic or pessimistic?" And I say, "Neither, a Christian cannot be either." We know too much about the world to be optimistic, too much about sin. And but we know too much about God's purposes to be pessimistic. The Christian mode is not optimism or

pessimism, that can wax and wane with our mood, it's hope, and that hope is Christ. Hope has a name.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Al Mohler: You know Jesus Christ.

Tim Moore: Our Blessed Hope.

Dr. Al Mohler: Absolutely. And so, we actually can go to sleep at night with all of these concerns so real, and we're not ignoring them, we're not denying them. We go to sleep at night because Jesus Christ is Lord, and because He is coming. And because the coming thing is His Kingdom, and the going thing is the kingdoms of this world. And so, we just need to remind ourselves of that. And yet, Christ has not yet come to claim His Church and to inaugurate His Kingdom in full. And so, evidentially we are here right now for a purpose. And so, that purpose is to do what Jesus commanded us to do until He comes. And you know the signs of the times are incredibly ominous if you're just looking at the world. But the signs of the times can never be ominous for someone who reads the Bible and believes in Christ. They can be humbling but not ominous.

Tim Moore: Well, I cite quite frequently a Jewish proverb that says, "If you think the world is going to end tomorrow, plant a tree today." Dr. Mohler I will say this, even as someone who looks forward to the Lord's soon return, you have embodied tree planting. And what do I mean by that? You're not planting an arbor full of trees, literally, but you are raising up young fruit bearers. And I think that is really what that proverb would have us to do. And so, until the Lord does come, many more will bear much fruit because of their interaction here at Southern because of you pouring into them. And I include myself in that blessed number. But thank you very much for the time of sitting down with us today, and reflecting on not just the signs of the times, but as you said the Blessed Hope which is not a concept, it is a person, and that is Jesus Christ.

Dr. Al Mohler: Well, amen. It has been a privilege to talk with you Tim. And I think we've talked about things that really matter.

Tim Moore: Yes, we have, always. Thank you, sir, very much.

Dr. Al Mohler: God bless you.

Tim Moore: Godspeed.

How Then Should We Live Segment

Nathan Jones: Have you ever had your children threatened?

Well, you just heard Dr. Mohler warn twice, "they're coming for our children." The sexual revolution that threatens to destroy civilization in its mad pursuit to replace the moral Lawgiver with unfettered individual autonomy is picking up speed. As proof check out this clip from the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. Ominously titled, "We're Coming For Your Children."

San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus: We're coming for your children. We are coming them. We are coming for them. We are coming for your children. We're coming for them. We are coming for your children.

Nathan Jones: Pretty blatant threat, isn't it? The sexual perversion movement isn't even trying to hide their strategy anymore. And why should they? Just gauge society's reaction to the song, which attempted to explain away the seriousness of their message as merely humorous satire. Western society now stands firmly behind the LGBTQ+ movement, lauding it as moral and a human rights issue. We are not on the way to fulfilling Romans 1, we're there!

Well, Dr. Mohler's has keenly sensed the cultural forces leading society toward judgment, proving that we are living on borrowed time, and that our Blessed Hope is coming soon!

He wrote about these rising threats in his latest book, *The Gathering Storm*. We would like to send you a copy for a donation of \$25 or more, which includes shipping. *The Gathering Storm* identifies these rising threats, and calls Christians to action. To get your copy just call the number on the screen or visit website.

For those who hold to a biblical worldview, we know that God's divine purpose and natural order for sexual union remains between one man and one woman for life. Jesus reiterated what He set down in Genesis 1, "That at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' saying, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh,'" Well, that means that fornication, which is sex outside of marriage, adultery, and homosexuality are all sins in need of repentance.

We are all born with a sin nature that pulls us towards different types of rebellion against God and His moral law. Fortunately, the Bible reveals what is and is not sin, so that along with our conscience and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, if saved, our children can know the difference between right and wrong.

And, no matter who the sinner is or what they've done, we can be forgiven, saved, and cleansed by placing our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

So, San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, we're coming for you as well, with the Gospel and in prayer, calling out "Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

End of Program